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Economic and Social Council

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Provisional summary record of the 5th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 13 February 2004, at 4 p.m.

President: Ms. Rasi ..... (Finland)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*)

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04-24142 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (*continued*) (E/2003/24, E/2003/29, E/2003/33, E/2003/90, E/2003/90/Add.1, E/2004/2, E/2004/8, E/2004/L.2, and E/2004/L.4)

Draft decision VII: Theme for the regional cooperation item of the substantive session of 2004 of the Economic and Social Council (E/2004/L.2)

1. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision contained in document E/2004/L.2.

2. **Mr. Wrafter** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said he accepted the theme on the clear understanding that it would not be the subject of a resolution at the substantive session in July 2004, in the context of the World Summit on the Information Society.

3. **Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, supported by **Mr. Aho-Glele** (Benin) and **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia), said that the theme should be adopted without conditions. All other action, including the adoption of a resolution, should be left for debate during the substantive session.

4. **Mr. Seth** (Secretary of the Council), in response to a request for clarification, said that the matter at hand was a simple decision. Following the Council's action thereon, delegations were free to express their views. Any statements they made would be recorded in the summary records of the meeting.

5. **The President** said she took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft decision.

6. *Draft decision VII was adopted.*

7. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America) said that the item had been presented as an information item and would be handled accordingly by her Government.

8. **Mr. Wrafter** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that his agreement was based on his earlier statement and the Secretary's clarification.

9. **Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar) reaffirmed that the Group of 77 and China accepted the theme without conditions.

Ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict (*continued*)

10. **The President** said that consultations would continue with the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, and that the respective reports of the Ad Hoc Groups would be dealt with at an additional meeting of the organizational session.

11. **Mr. Wrafter** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, the potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and, in addition, Iceland and Norway, said that the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau was an example of the increasing interaction between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in addressing the challenges of peace-building in countries emerging from conflict. The United Nations, which had significant experience in guiding transition processes, must continue to work with the Transitional Government to prevent a slide back into conflict, and to address longer-term sustainable development and governance issues. The Ad Hoc Group had an important role to play in encouraging the international community to remain engaged. The European Union therefore favoured an extension of the Group's mandate.

12. There had been encouraging developments in Guinea-Bissau since the Group's previous meeting, and he looked forward to the holding of free and fair elections on 28 March 2004. Elections, however, were not the end of the transition phase, but a step towards democratic governance and legitimacy. The European Union was anxious to see a rapid return to constitutional legality and, until that was achieved, wished to be sure that fundamental freedoms, human rights and political pluralism would be respected. The transition phase would decide the future stability and prosperity of the country, and the commitment of the international community was therefore essential.

13. Guinea-Bissau remained one of the world's poorest countries. It needed to achieve stability in order to reduce poverty and help spread stability throughout the region. Accordingly, the emergency economic

management fund, established by the United Nations Development Programme to fund recurrent budgetary expenses in key sectors and to promote transparency and accountability in the provision of emergency aid, was in immediate need of generous donations. The European Union was already an important contributor. He welcomed the sustained commitment of the Bretton Woods institutions to Guinea-Bissau, and commended the Economic Community of West African States and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries for their continued positive engagement.

14. The transition would be followed by the development phase, when it would be necessary to address longer-term development goals. In that connection, the international partnership approach advocated by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group was the best means of helping Guinea-Bissau move towards a more stable and prosperous future.

15. Turning to the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, he noted the European Union's role in both the political and the development fields. It had been a witness to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi and was represented on the Agreement's Implementation Committee; it provided material support to the peace process and humanitarian assistance, and maintained development projects in a difficult environment.

16. He commended all the Burundian parties involved in the difficult negotiations that had led in 2003 to important ceasefire agreements and the swift integration of the Transitional Government. He welcomed the outcome of the talks held in the Netherlands, in January 2004, between the President of Burundi and the Forces nationales de libération (FNL). The facilitation team and the African Mission in Burundi had done outstanding work.

17. Despite overall progress towards peace, the situation in Burundi remained fragile. Many refugees and internally displaced persons still needed resettlement, the ceasefire was not all-inclusive and a long-existing climate of impunity had yet to be addressed. He condemned the tragic murder of the Apostolic Nuncio to Burundi on 29 December 2003.

18. Highlighting some of the principal challenges, he said that peace and security would be unattainable without the full participation of FNL in the peace process; an integrated army and police force must be established and former combatants disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated for the transition to succeed; the implementation of the Arusha Agreement and the preparation of elections must remain a priority; and the advances in the peace process must be consolidated with improvements in the human rights and social and economic situations, in particular with regard to health and education and the situation of women and children.

19. Economic revival, including through diversification, was essential to sustainable peace. The European Union had participated in the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi, held in Brussels in January 2004. Parties to the conference had pledged $1,032 million over the next three years towards poverty eradication and sustainable development, and efforts were being made to allow Burundi to participate in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

20. He commended the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi for the Group's work; the European Union looked forward to its report and intended to study its recommendations carefully. Action between the Economic and Social Council, through the Ad Hoc Group and the Security Council should continue. He congratulated the Government of Burundi for progress achieved to date, and said that the European Union's engagement would continue.

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227 and 52/12 B (E/2003/90 and Add.1)

21. **The President** said it had been decided, following informal consultations, that more time was required for consideration of the Secretary-General's report contained in documents E/2003/90 and Add.1, and requested the facilitator to continue her consultations.

Draft decision: Bureau of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/2004/L.4)

22. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision contained in document E/2004/L.4, which she had submitted on the basis of informal consultations. The draft decision had no programme implications.

23. *Draft decision E/2004/L.4 was adopted.*

Committee for Development Policy (E/2003/33)

24. **The President** said it had been decided, following information consultations, that more time was required for consideration of the report of the Committee for Development Policy contained in document E/2003/33, and requested the facilitator to continue her consultations.

Draft decision: Report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-fourth session and provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission (E/2003/24)

25. **The President** invited the Council to take action on the draft decision contained in document E/2003/24.

26. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America) requested a vote by roll-call.

27. **Mr. Al-Bader** (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China in explanation of vote before the voting, noted that concerns had been raised regarding the report of the Statistical Commission, which was worrying because the report had been adopted by consensus. He wished to place on record the unqualified agreement of the Group of 77 with the report, and to reiterate the views expressed by the Chair of the Group of 77 at the Council's substantive session in July 2003.

28. He disagreed with the suggestion that the Commission's emphasis on indicators for monitoring the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 8 was not based on a consensus among members of the Council. Paragraph 32 of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, which had been adopted after the Commission's thirty-fourth session, stressed the need for such indicators, and the Group of 77 would be dismayed if delegations sought subsequently to dissociate themselves from it.

29. The Nordic countries were to be commended for their expressed intention to be among the first of the developed countries to report on the implementation of Goal 8. He urged the Statistical Commission to address the task of drawing up an international framework for such reporting, which would be essential to the fulfilment of its mandate in relation to the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

30. **Ms. Tamlyn** (United States of America) said that the United States would vote against the draft decision. It was the Council's responsibility to exercise its oversight authority over its numerous subsidiary bodies; it must never serve as a rubber stamp. She wished to raise three points in that regard.

31. Firstly, in recommendation 4 (c) of its report the Commission had undertaken to pronounce on issues outside its mandate. It was not within its purview to prepare for the review of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2005 or to prioritize the Millennium Development Goals, and it was inappropriate for the Commission to instruct a selected group of countries on reporting requirements. The Council should remind functional commissions to operate strictly within their mandates.

32. Secondly, recommendation 4 (c) did not reflect an intergovernmental consensus on either the Goals or on preparations for the event in 2005. In undertaking to create policy, the Commission was encroaching on the Council's prerogatives. Where such policy was inconsistent with its own, the Council needed to point that out.

33. Thirdly, subsidiary bodies must follow correct procedure. Members must never be requested to approve substantive changes to the draft report without prior submission of such changes in writing and adequate time to consider them. Regrettably, that procedure had not been followed at the Commission's session.

34. She commended the Statistical Commission on its important work, and urged it to discuss the issues she had raised. She also urged the Council to take its oversight responsibilities seriously.

35. **Ms. McElwaine** (Ireland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said she regretted that no consensus had been reached on the draft decision. The European Union would abstain from voting. She would welcome clarification from the Commission of the parts of its report that related to reporting on the Millennium Development Goals. She wished to note that the European Union in no way dissociated itself from General Assembly resolution 57/270 B. All Member States should work together towards fulfilment of the Goals.

36. *The vote was taken by roll-call.*

37. *Panama, having been drawn by lot by the President, was called upon to vote first.*

In favour:

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Burundi, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe

Against:

United States of America

Abstaining:

Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom

38. *The draft decision was adopted by 36 votes to 1, with 16 abstentions.*

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.